

Minutes of the meeting of Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) held at Online meeting on Friday 12 March 2021 at 2.00 pm

Present: Mrs Ault, Mrs Barker, Mr Caldicott, Venerable Choesang, Mr Debenham, Mr Harrington, Cllr Harvey, Cllr Hewitt, Mrs Nugent, Cllr Stone and Ms Westlake

Officers: Strategic Finance Manager, School improvement advisor and Consultant to SACRE

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr Burbidge and Mr Nicholas.

10. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no nominated substitutes.

11. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 23 October 2020 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the chairperson.

12. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

No public questions received.

13. SACRE BUDGET 2021/22

SACRE received a report from the lead officer for SACRE to note the budget for 2021/22. The strategic finance manager, corporate services, introduced the report and explained that the funding for SACRE was agreed through the Schools Forum.

During the debate concern was expressed that SACRE may not be fulfilling its statutory obligations; SACRE only met twice a year and it was felt that additional funding should be sought to ensure one meeting each school term. The convening of a working group to consider if SACRE was compliant with statutory responsibilities and to make a proposal for additional funding was suggested. The proposal would be put to the Schools Forum to consider.

The Chairperson and Mr Caldicott would form part of the working group and a councillor would also participate. Any proposal produced by the working group would be considered at the autumn meeting of SACRE.

14. RE CONFERENCES

SACRE received an update from the RE Consultant concerning the syllabus launch and implementation training. The RE Consultant provided details of the number of schools

that had attended the event and the number accessing the recording following the launch and training.

The RE Consultant outlined plans for the primary conference that would take place in June. The conference would be an online event and was to be undertaken in conjunction with Worcestershire. It was explained that the conference would ensure a more formal process for the provision of feedback to guide the content of the following years conference.

The RE Consultant explained that the secondary conference would also be conducted online and Gloucestershire had invited Herefordshire and Worcestershire to join its arrangements. SACRE indicated it was content to join Gloucestershire's arrangements.

The SEN conference was raised and it was confirmed that due to difficulties with the pandemic arrangements had been delayed. It was hoped that the conference would take place later in the year.

15. UPDATE ON ANY NEW RE INITIATIVES

The RE Consultant introduced the updates on new RE Initiatives and provided an update on the worldviews project of the RE Council of England and Wales. It was requested that further detail of the project was provided at the next meeting. It was also requested that Neville Meredith, Community Cohesion Officer, attend the next meeting of SACRE to talk about the work he is undertaking.

16. SACRE MEMBERSHIP

SACRE considered a report by the Clerk to the Committee concerning the membership of SACRE.

The position of a representative of other faiths as a whole was raised and whether it should be retained in Group A.

The details of religious identification in Herefordshire from the previous census in 2011 were considered out of date and details from the 2021 census would help SACRE determine appropriate representatives on its membership. The results of the 2021 census would not however be known until 2023.

The potential inclusion of a Humanist representative on SACRE was discussed and the proportion of SACREs across England and Wales with such a representative. The Humanist representative on Gloucestershire SACRE was raised and the non-religious perspective provided on the committee. It was commented that Humanism represented one part of the much broader non-religious worldview.

The growth of the Monrovia Church in Ledbury and the role of the Free Church representative on Group A to represent Christian denominations beyond the Church of England and Roman Catholic was discussed.

Consideration of the SACRE constitution as a whole, including the membership, would take place at the next meeting. Any changes to the membership could be deferred until the next meeting.

17. CHANGES TO THE SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

There was a discussion regarding the production of a periodic newsletter from SACRE for circulation to schools which would provide a link between the committee and teachers. It was suggested that the newsletter would include: the updates on new RE initiatives; information from NATRE; and a competition. It was commented that it would be useful if an element of the newsletter could be for children. Ms Westlake would work with Mrs Ault and the Chairperson to produce the initial edition and in future other members of SACRE could submit material for inclusion.

The Lead Officer for SACRE explained that a link to the newsletter could be provided in Spotlight.

18. ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

Ms Westlake explained that a listing of individuals who could work with schools in the provision of RE teaching had been compiled and would be circulated following the meeting. The Lead Officer for SACRE explained that it was important that detail was included in the guide that schools were responsible for assessing the suitability of visitors.

Mr Harrington provided an update on the work of the Diocesan Education Authority in respect of RE.

The Chairperson explained that ahead of the next meeting of SACRE there would be a 1 hour training session.

19. MEETING DATES - 2021-2022

The proposed dates for meetings of SACRE in 2021/22 were noted. It was commented that the proposed meeting date in October conflicted with the autumn half term break. The timing of the meeting would be checked and moved if necessary.

The meeting ended at 4.14 pm

Chairperson